

commission will produce recommendations for the teaching of Romani history and promoting Romani culture.

Madam Speaker, there is an awful lot of hand wringing about the deplorable situation of Roma today. Across the OSCE region, they face profound discrimination, sometimes manifested in the worst forms of racially motivated violence. Moreover, in 2003, the United Nations Development Program issued a report on the situation in five Central European countries, concluding that, "by measures ranging from literacy to infant mortality to basic nutrition, most of the region's Roma endure living conditions closer to those of Sub-Saharan Africa than to Europe."

But if you want to know where you're going, you have to know where you came from; if we want to change this status quo, we have to understand the past, which makes this new commission vital for Roma.

With respect to Roma, that means three things. First, it means understanding the history of Roma before World War II, and in the case of Romania and Moldova, that requires teaching, studying, and acknowledging the enslavement of Roma. Second, the genocide of Roma during World War II must also be remembered, and more must be done to study and understand the diverse experiences of Roma during the war in different European countries. Finally, we must put an end to the pernicious, dangerous myth that communism was "good" for Roma.

With all this in mind, Prime Minister Tariceanu's initiative is really an extremely important step in addressing so many of the problems that Roma face today. I commend him for his leadership and I look forward to following closely the work of this body.

#### HONORING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MONTH

#### HON. ADRIAN SMITH

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 29, 2007*

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of International Women's Month, which this year we celebrated during the month of March.

Throughout the month, we have passed legislation recognizing the impact women have had on our Nation and the world itself. We have heard speeches honoring these individuals who have made life richer and better.

As March comes to a close, I want to individually honor several women from my home state of Nebraska who have made a difference.

I also want to encourage all Members of Congress to help celebrate International Women's Month all year long, through education, support, and service.

Throughout Nebraska's history, we have been fortunate to have had a number of exceptional women call our State home. It is in their name and the names of the exceptional women yet to come that we celebrate this month—and all year long.

Names such as Louise Pound, Willa Cather, and Mari Sandoz spring readily to mind when discussing Nebraska women who have opened minds and imaginations.

But during times of change, women such as children's crusader Grace Abbott and jour-

nalist Rheta Childe Dorr—the first woman to cover World War I from the front lines—have served as inspirations.

The first American Indian woman doctor was Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte. The hospital she built in Walthill is now called the Picotte Center.

Nebraska women have also shouldered leadership for our State. Senator JoAnn Maxey was the first African American to serve as State Senator. Senators Fern Orme and Florence Reynolds also deserve mention.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention Governor Kay Orr, who was elected the first Republican woman Governor in the United States, or Rep. Virginia Smith, who set the standard for all House Members, not just from the Third District of Nebraska.

Finally, we should also honor the women who served in our armed forces and who put their lives at risk for our freedom. In particular, let us remember Sgt. 1st Class Linda Ann Tarango-Griess and Staff Sgt. Tricia Jameson, who lost their lives in Operation Iraqi Freedom and who called Nebraska home.

Our country is blessed to have freedoms so many areas of the world unfortunately do not. We have the freedom to succeed, and many women through our history have done just that. Now is the time to encourage the next generation to follow in their footsteps.

#### IN HONOR OF JAIME HERNANDEZ IN RECOGNITION OF HIS EXEM- PLARY SERVICE

#### HON. XAVIER BECERRA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 29, 2007*

Mr. BECERRA. Madam Speaker, it is my privilege to rise today and acknowledge Jaime Hernandez, a friend and outstanding leader for working men and women in America. On March 31, 2007, community members and leaders throughout Los Angeles will gather to commend Jaime for his 38 years of dedication to the Laborers' International Union of North America, Local 300.

Jaime was born to Antonio and Amalia Hernandez in Jalisco, Mexico in 1942. Like so many people, his parents moved the family to the United States in search of the American dream. He learned the value of union work early on from his father, who was a committed and passionate Laborer for 14 years. In this respect, Jaime and I are much alike. Just as Jaime's father spent many years as a proud Laborer, so did my father. Like Jaime, when I worked alongside my father as a young man, I learned from him the dignity and pride that comes from hard work. Whether digging ditches, laying cement, or raising manholes, I learned that if you work hard you deserve the American dream. I know Jaime and I both draw upon these lessons to this day.

Since first joining the Laborers in 1969, Jaime has fought for greater opportunities for workers, better wages, expanded benefits, and safer work sites across California. Rising from the role of a rank-and-file member, he was appointed as a Laborers' Field Representative in 1987. Then in 1994, his peers acted on their recognition of his talents and commitment and elected him President and Executive Board Member of Laborers' Local 300. His subse-

quent re-elections in leadership roles resulted from Jaime having distinguished himself in the labor community as a true leader and advocate for working men and women. Jaime is now retiring as Secretary-Treasurer—a position he has held since 2000.

A. Philip Randolph, a prominent civil rights and union leader, once said, "The essence of trade unionism is social uplift. The labor movement has been the haven for the dispossessed, the despised, the neglected, the downtrodden, and the poor." Just as his parents sought a better life for their children through hard work, Jaime has worked to keep that opportunity available to people from all walks of life. Jaime has been an integral part of the Laborers' mission by bringing justice, honor, and a voice to hard working people across America.

Jaime has been married to his high school sweetheart, Anita, for 44 years. Together, they have four children and nine grandchildren, all of whom have been raised with Jaime's understanding and reverence for social and economic justice. They have all seen Jaime work on behalf of non-profit organizations, charities, law enforcement agencies, and children's groups with the assistance of the union.

Madam Speaker, it is with pride as a friend, a former member of the Laborers' Union (Local 187 in Sacramento), and an admirer of hard work that I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing Jaime Hernandez for his lifetime devotion to bringing dignity to the lives of every day Americans, and his loyal service to Local 300 of the Laborers' International Union of North America. On behalf of the countless Laborers, including me, to whom Jaime Hernandez has dedicated his career, and the entire labor community which has benefited immensely from his lifelong contributions, I say thank you and may you enjoy many more years of fruitful endeavors.

#### TRIBUTE TO MANATEE COUNTY SHERIFF CHARLIE WELLS

#### HON. VERN BUCHANAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 29, 2007*

Mr. BUCHANAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Manatee County Sheriff Charlie Wells who will retire on April 2nd after 41 years in law enforcement. Sheriff Wells is an honorable public servant whose selfless dedication, vision, and leadership has helped to protect the more than 300,000 residents of Manatee County and earned him the respect of the community as well as his colleagues in law enforcement.

Charlie Wells was first elected sheriff in 1984 and took office in January of 1985. He was reelected five times, serving a total of 22 years, which makes him the longest serving sheriff in the history of Manatee County.

Among his greatest achievements is the enactment of the Stop Turning Our Prisoners Act, which he helped pass to require inmates to serve at least 85 percent of their prison sentence. He is also credited with pioneering and implementing several other innovative programs designed to help keep kids in school and out of trouble. They include the establishment of:

A Police Athletic League recreation complex which was expanded from a recreational program to one of Florida's first charter schools;